

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 183058

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DRAFTED BY:EA:LC:JDROSENTHAL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USDEL SECRETARY

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 183058

EXDIS (MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT)

TOSEC 080304

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, LA, US

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF LAO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

REF: A) VIENTIANE 5065; B) VIENTIANE 5047;

C) VIENTIANE 5052

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. WE APPRECIATE YOUR ANALYSIS IN REF A OF SITUATION AND
POSSIBILITIES REGARDING OUR RELATIONS WITH PGNU. WE AGREE
THAT CONTINUING TO FOLLOW THE POLICY OF PRESERVATION OF A
MODEST-SIZED EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE THERE EVEN IN FACE OF THE
LAST FEW MONTHS' SEVERE PROVOCATION HAS SERVED OUR INTEREST.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 183058

2. WE SEEK TO CONTINUE IN THIS VEIN AND ARE PREPARED TO MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE THERE AS LONG AS THE SAFETY OF OUR PEOPLE IS NOT SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED AND OUR MISSION CAN FUNCTION REASONABLY EFFECTIVELY. WE WISH TO AVOID UN-NECESSARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE PGNU WHERE POSSIBLE AND TO ASSURE THAT IF A SUSPENSION OF RELATIONS DOES COME TO PASS, IT WILL CLEARLY BE AS A RESULT OF THE PGNU'S ACTIONS.

3. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUSNESS AND IMMEDIACY OF THE PROBLEM OF THE OCCUPIED COMPOUNDS, WE DO NOT SEE THIS NECESSARILY AS THE ULTIMATE DETERMINANT OF WHETHER OR NOT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE PGNU CONTINUE. RATHER, WE PREFER TO VIEW IT AS ONE OF THE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO BE RESOLVED IF OUR RELATIONS ARE TO IMPROVE. IN PARTICULAR WE WISH TO AVOID PROLONGED FRUITLESS HAGGLING AND CONFRONTATION OVER THIS ISSUE TO THE DETRIMENT OF OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES.

4. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE PROCEED ON ASSUMPTION FIRST OF ALL THAT WE DO NOT INTEND TO AGREE TO PGNU OCCUPATION OR TAKEOVER OF COMPOUNDS OR TO TURNOVER OF EMBASSY MATERIALS. WE CONCUR THAT THIS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE, EVEN IF WE MAY HAVE TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF IT UNDER CONTINUED PROTEST. YOU SHOULD GO AHEAD AS PLANNED ON TERMINATION OF UAE CONTRACT, PRESENTING THIS TO PGNU AS FAIT ACCOMPLI WHEN ACCOMPLISHED AND DISMISSING THIS PROBLEM THEREAFTER. YOU SHOULD WORK OUT OTHER ARRANGEMENTS TO KEEP EMBASSY FUNCTIONING WITHOUT GSO AND SILVER CITY COMPOUNDS AND REITERATE ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS OUR OFFER TO SELL LATTER. IN YOUR WRITTEN AND ORAL DEALINGS WITH PGNU ON THIS ISSUE, YOU SHOULD REFUTE OBVIOUS PGNU ALLEGATIONS AND SPURIOUS CLAIMS BUT WITHOUT RANCOR OR POLEMICS AND WITHOUT IMPLYING SUSPENSION OF RELATIONS IF THEY DO NOT REACT FAVORABLY.

5. ALONG THESE LINES WE CONCUR IN GENERAL APPROACH YOU TAKE IN YOUR PROPOSED REPLY TO MFA NOTE (REF C). WE BELIEVE IT IS USEFUL TO PLACE ON THE RECORD OUR POSITION ON THE SPECIFIC ISSUES THE PGNU RAISES. HOWEVER, YOUR REPLY SHOULD BE SHORTENED AND TONED DOWN SOMEWHAT TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 183058

AVOID GETTING INTO FURTHER FRUITLESS EXCHANGES ON MINOR ISSUES WHEN WE ARE APPARENTLY AT A STANDOFF ON THE BASIC ONE. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES AND DELETIONS TO YOUR PROPOSED NOTE.

6. IN PARAGRAPH TWO OF YOUR DRAFT, DELETE EVERYTHING AFTER SECOND SENTENCE AND REPLACE WITH ADDITIONAL SENTENCE NOTING THAT "UAE'S CONTRACT WITH USAID WAS ONLY ONE OF

SEVERAL, INCLUDING THE ONE IT STILL HAS WITH THE EMBASSY."
FYI: WE DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SINGLE OUT
RAL, SINCE THIS MAY BE SEIZED UPON TO BOLSTER WHAT WE
UNDERSTAND IS THE NOW-FADING CLAIM BY RAL EMPLOYEES FOR
TERMINATION BONUSES. END FYI.

7. IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR NOTE, DELETE ALL AFTER "WITH
LAO LAWS.: FYI: WE SEE NO REASON TO INTERPRET THE
MINISTRY'S CITATION OF ARTICLE 12 BEYOND THAT ALREADY
STATED IN THEIR NOTE. IF THE POINT COMES UP SUBSEQUENTLY,
YOU CAN OF COURSE DENY IT ORALLY ALONG THE LINES YOU HAVE
SET DOWN. END FYI.

8. IN YOUR PARAGRAPH 5(2), THE FIFTH SENTENCE SHOULD
BE CHANGED TO READ "THE EMBASSY WISHES TO REMIND THE
MINISTRY THAT REGARDLESS OF THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE
UAE CONTAINED IN ITS NOTE, THIS IN NO WAY CONSTITUTES
....." THE LAST SENTENCE OF THAT PARAGRAPH SHOULD BE
DELETED.

9. THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH OF THE
NOTE, BEGINNING "FAILURE TO DO SO..." SHOULD BE DELETED.

10. WE NOTE RECENT PRESS REPORTS ATTRIBUTED TO MISSION
SPOKESMAN INDICATING EMBASSY'S SHARP DISPLEASURE WITH
PGNU'S FAILURE TO GIVE SATISFACTION ON OCCUPIED COMPOUNDS
AND FORMER EMPLOYEES' PERSONAL EFFECTS. WHILE WE AGREE
THAT YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE OUR POSITION CLEAR
PUBLICLY WHEN ASKED, IT SHOULD BE DONE IN A LOW-KEY,
MATTER OF FACT WAY CONSISTENT WITH OUR APPROACH OUTLINED
ABOVE. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SHOULD NOT USE PROVOCATIVE
TERMS SUCH AS "STEALING" IN DESCRIBING PGNU'S ACTIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 183058

11. AS YOU SUGGEST, WE HAVE DISCUSSED PROBLEM OF
OCCUPIED COMPOUNDS WITH LAO AMBASSADOR SEVERAL TIMES,
MOST RECENTLY AT LUNCH JULY 31. WE DOUBT HE WILL WEIGH
IN VERY HEAVILY AT THIS POINT, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO
RAISE ISSUE WITH HIM AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.
INGERSOLL

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